

Message Text

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NAVSOPPACT NAPLES

S E C R E T STATE 147154

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, IT, GR

SUBJECT: LOCATION OF COMMANDER CARRIER GROUP TWO STAFF IN
NAPLES

REF: STATE 123079 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY. NAVY DESIRES THAT SENIOR CARRIER TASK FORCE

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COMMANDER AND STAFF REMAIN HOMEPORTED IN MEDITERRANEAN

WITH NAPLES PREFERRED LOCATION FOR STAFF FAMILIES. EMBASSY COMMENT REQUESTED ON FEASIBILITY AND TIMING OF PROPOSED APPROACH TO GOI CONCERNING RELOCATION OF STAFF AND DEPENDENTS TO NAPLES IN SUMMER 1975. END SUMMARY.

1. ALTHOUGH US MADE NO SPECIFIC COMMITMENT TO RELOCATE COMMAND TASK FORCE SIXTY (COMMANDER CARRIER GROUP TWO) STAFF FROM ATHENS IN THE RECENT SECOND ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH GREECE, THE NAVY RECOGNIZES THE NECESSITY TO RELOCATE THE STAFF AND HAS EXAMINED THE OPTIONS AVAILABLE FOR RELOCATION. THE PRINCIPAL CHOICES ARE FOR THE STAFF TO REMAIN IN THE MEDITERRANEAN OR TO BECOME A CONUS BASED ROTATIONAL STAFF. THERE ARE SUBSTANTIAL OPERATIONAL ADVANTAGES IN RETAINING A SENIOR CARRIER TASK FORCE COMMANDER PERMANENTLY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN. SINCE AUGUST 1972, WHEN THE STAFF WAS HOMEPORTED IN ATHENS, IT HAS BEEN

DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN EVERY CRISIS RESPONSE BY US FORCES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN. THE CONTINUITY AND PERSPECTIVE AFFORDED BY HOMEPORTING A CARRIER TASK FORCE COMMANDER HAVE RESULTED IN AN UP-TO-DATE PICTURE OF THE RAPIDLY SHIFTING POLITICO-MILITARY SCENE AND MAINTENANCE OF A HIGH LEVEL OF EXPERTISE IN BOTH STRATEGIC AND TACTICAL AREAS. THIS, TOGETHER WITH THE ACCRUED KNOWLEDGE OF AREA POLITICAL SENSITIVITIES, HAS GREATLY ENHANCED THE ABILITY OF THE SIXTH FLEET TO ACCOMPLISH ITS MISSION. THE ONLY SIGNIFICANT DISADVANTAGES IN HOMEPORTING THIS STAFF ARE THE NORMAL PERSONNEL PROBLEMS RELATED TO OVERSEAS RESIDENCE.

2. THE STAFF OF COMMANDER CARRIER GROUP TWO IS COMPOSED OF 19 OFFICERS AND 16 ENLISTED. TWENTY-ONE FAMILIES WITH A TOTAL OF 61 DEPENDENTS CURRENTLY RESIDE IN ATHENS. IF RETAINED IN THE MED, THE US PRESENCE FROM THIS STAFF WOULD REMAIN ABOUT 100 PERSONS. IT IS HIGHLY DESIRABLE TO LOCATE THE STAFF NEAR A PORT CAPABLE OF ACCEPTING A CARRIER. THERE IS, HOWEVER, NO PLAN TO HOMEPORT A CARRIER IN THE MED. THE SITE SHOULD ALSO HAVE SUITABLE SHORE FACILITIES WITH COMMUNICATIONS, AN AIRFIELD, AND ADEQUATE DEPENDENT HOUSING AND SUPPORT. NAVY HAS

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EXAMINED ALTERNATIVES AND IT APPEARS THAT EITHER NAPLES OR GAETA PROVIDES THE BEST ALTERNATE MED LOCATION, WITH NAPLES THE PREFERRED LOCATION. THE STAFF ITSELF WOULD REMAIN EMBARKED IN THE DEPLOYED CARRIER, WHICH WOULD CONTINUE TO VISIT NAPLES AND OTHER MEDITERRANEAN PORTS AS IN THE PAST. THE ONLY PERCEPTIBLE CHANGE IN NAPLES WOULD BE THE PRESENCE OF THE ADDITIONAL FAMILIES, SOME OF WHICH INITIALLY WOULD MOVE FROM ATHENS, WHILE OTHERS

IN SUMMER ROTATION WOULD MOVE DIRECTLY FROM THE UNITED STATES.

3. THE CARRIER GROUP STAFF RELOCATION POSSIBILITY IN ITALY WAS DISCUSSED INFORMALLY BETWEEN AMBASSADOR VOLPE AND ADMIRAL SHEAR DURING A RECENT MEETING. WHILE RESERVING JUDGEMENT, THE AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT WE HAVE ASSURED THE ITALIANS THAT NO ACTIVITIES WOULD BE TRANSFERRED TO ITALY FROM GREECE AND THAT THE ASSOCIATION OF "CTF-60" WITH ATHENS MIGHT NECESSITATE A CHANGE OF THE UNIT IDENTIFICATION. THIS REQUIREMENT CAN BE MET BY USE OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE TITLE COMMANDER CARRIER GROUP TWO STAFF IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE ITALIANS. THE REAR ADMIRAL IN COMMAND, MOREOVER, IS DUE FOR RELIEF IN JULY OR AUGUST.

4. EMBASSY COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS AS TO THE FEASIBILITY AND POSSIBLE TIMING OF SUCH A MOVE IN LIGHT OF USG OVERALL INTERESTS IN ITALY ARE REQUESTED.

5. EMBASSY ALSO REQUESTED TO COMMENT ON WHETHER FORMAL ITALIAN APPROVAL PRIOR TO THE TRANSFER IS REQUIRED OR WHETHER ONLY NOTIFICATION OF THE MOVE WOULD BE NECESSARY. IF THE FORMER, WOULD EMBASSY CONSIDER IT TIMELY TO APPROACH GOI SOON AFTER THE JUNE ELECTIONS. A LOW KEY, LOW-PROFILE MOVE OF THE FAMILIES THIS SUMMER BEFORE THE START OF THE SCHOOL YEAR WOULD BE HIGHLY DESIRABLE. INGERSOLL

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